

ADVISORY BOARD ON TEACHER EDUCATION AND LICENSURE

Minutes - November 20, 2000

Meeting Date and Location: November 20, 2000
Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia
Founder's Room, Stuart C. Siegel Center

ABTEL Members Present: Sally Boese, Mychele Brickner, Sharon Condrey,
Ronald Diss, Brenda Duda, Ken Fleming, Jill Fox,
Mark Glaser, Wayne Harris, Holly Hawthorne,
Gertrude Jones, Kimberly Loy, Mary McCauley,
Jane Massey-Wilson, Nancy Miller, Donna Stevens
Smith, and Susan Walton

ABTEL Members Absent: Mary Bicouvaris

Board of Education Liaison Present: Susan T. Noble

Ex-Officio Members Present: Carole Ballard and Cora Salzberg

Department of Education Staff: Thomas A. Elliott, JoAnne Y. Carver, Byrd Latham,
Winston Odom, Patty S. Pitts, and Regina Thomas

Guests: Richard Allen, Pam Bebant, Joseph Scott Davis,
Michael Davis, Tom Heffner, John Oehler, Bart
Perlman, Diane Simon, Cari L. Vickey, Beverly
Warren

Full Board Meeting

Brenda Duda, chair of the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure, called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 a.m. at the VCU Siegel Center, Richmond, Virginia.

Brenda Duda and Thomas A. Elliott expressed appreciation to Jill Fox on behalf of ABTEL for having dinner in her home for all Advisory Board members and Department of Education staff.

Thomas A. Elliott also announced Winston Odom's resignation from ABTEL and his employment with the Division of Teacher Education and Licensure. Nominations to fill the vacancy have been received and profiles will be sent to the Board of Education for the

January 11 meeting. The full ABTEL membership should be in place for attendance at the March meeting.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Holly Hawthorne made a motion to approve the agenda and Ken Fleming seconded. The minutes of the September 18 meeting were amended to show that Holly Hawthorne did not attend. **Mary McCauley moved that the minutes be accepted as corrected and Donna Smith seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

Aligning the Virginia Commonwealth University Teacher Preparation Program with Teacher Licensure Competencies

Dean of the School of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University, Dr. John S. Oehler led a presentation on the teacher preparation program at VCU. Currently, 24,000 students are enrolled at VCU with 1,400 enrolled in the School of Education. Dr. Oehler reported that in addition to the preparation of new teachers, the program is committed to the continued professional education of teachers.

Dean Oehler introduced Dr. Diane Simon, Associate Dean in the School of Education, who made a Power Point presentation on steps for entering the teacher preparation program that graduates about 200-250 candidates annually. The theme and conceptual framework of the program is the Teacher as Decision Maker. All of the curriculum and field experiences are planned around this concept. The program is based on the following five areas: foundation in the arts and sciences, an academic major, training in teaching methodology in the teaching area, and clinical experiences that include 16 weeks of student teaching. Students who complete the five-year teacher preparation program receive two degrees, the BA or BS plus the M.A.T., Master of Arts in Teaching. The average age of students in the program is 28; 63 percent transfer from community colleges or other four-year institutions. The MAT program is offered in four areas: elementary, middle, secondary, and special education.

Accompanying Dr. Oehler and Dr. Simon were Dr. Michael Davis, Director of Graduate Studies, and Dr. Thomas Hepner, Director of Continuing Studies, who described the Richmond Metropolitan Alternative Licensure Program, which has been developed for secondary teachers employed locally on a three-year provisional license. Dr. Davis discussed the five courses offered in the program. All are focused on the Standards of Learning and technology.

Dr. Oehler concluded by asking ABTEL to share in the challenge to maintain high quality in the teaching profession at a time when we are facing the demand for more teachers.

Dr. Oehler also recognized ABTEL member, Jill Fox, who is the VCU faculty liaison at Mary Munford Elementary school. Mary Munford is one of seven professional

development school (PDS) partnerships that the School of Education has developed with area schools.

Agenda Item A: An Impact Study on Praxis I Scores in Virginia: July 1, 1996 – July 1, 2000

Bart Perlman, Educational Testing Service (ETS), presented data for feedback from ABTEL members regarding the longitudinal impact study of Virginia's Praxis I Scores. ABTEL members asked that the following information be included in the report:

Total number of test takers
Score distribution of students who do not pass
Score data for Hispanic students.

Mr. Perlman also shared information regarding the ETS decision to discontinue the Praxis I Computer Based Test (CBT) as of the fall of 2001. A concordant table was developed by ETS to equate CBT scores to the PPST paper/pencil version. Using the concordant table, more students have been passing the CBT than the PPST. In the future, the PPST test will be offered via computer. There are now six forms of the test for the six times the test is administered nationally. In the future, more forms of the test will be available.

Agenda Item B: First Review of a Resolution Examining the Board of Education Requirement for the Praxis I Assessment in Mathematics for Initial Licensure in Virginia

Susan T. Noble and Thomas A. Elliott reviewed a resolution under consideration by the Board of Education to amend the licensure regulations for individuals, not planning to teach mathematics, who have been unsuccessful on two attempts at achieving the required mathematics score.

Thomas A. Elliott explained that the Praxis I scores were set at a time when accountability was being called for in K-12 schools and in institutions of higher education. This reform movement and accountability continues but with additional knowledge about the impact of such requirements. Recently, the Board has closely examined the SOL, the statewide assessment program, and the Standards of Accreditation (SOA). After deliberation, new SOA have been adopted. Data such as what we have now were not available when the scores were set. Many statements of concern have come to the Department of Education, the Superintendent's office, and to the president of the Board of Education as to the impact of the scores on teachers who are successful in the classroom but have been unable to pass the test and are forced to leave.

Therefore, the Board has resolved to involve the public in this issue. The Attorney General's Office has said the change proposed in the resolution constituted a change in the licensure regulations and any licensure change must go through the APA process.

A lengthy discussion followed the presentation of the resolution during which ABTEL members expressed a number of concerns regarding the proposed resolution. Susan Walton questioned approving the resolution without having the results of the impact data. She also asked if the resolution would keep the Board from changing scores in the future and if that were done, would the resolution stand.

Jill Fox expressed concern that ABTEL did not have the opportunity to discuss the resolution prior to the Board's action. She also suggested that the resolution would allow anyone to take the test two times and take advantage of the score waiver. She felt it unwise for the Board to take action based on anecdotal evidence or to make a change without the impact data.

Dr. Elliott confirmed that the proposed resolution would apply to anyone who is seeking initial licensure.

Wayne Harris reported receiving mixed results from Virginia superintendents when the proposed resolution was discussed. As an alternative to the resolution, some superintendents suggested that all of the Praxis I score requirements should be reviewed and adjustments should be made if warranted. He questioned why mathematics was singled out as the only one of the three score requirements that could be waived. He also asked about the percentage of students who should be expected to pass the assessment.

Mychele Brickner questioned the intent of the resolution and also asked why a specific score had not been included. She also pointed out that the resolution did not require remediation prior to repeated test-taking. She was also concerned that approval of the resolution to continue through the APA process would be generally interpreted as ABTEL's approval of the resolution. She asked if ABTEL members could recommend changes to the resolution. The response was no.

Jane Massey-Wilson asked if someone who failed the mathematics portion of Praxis I could teach mathematics in the elementary schools. The response was yes.

Holly Hawthorne supported adjusting the scores but not waiving them. She also supported an average of the three scores. She indicated a fear of encouraging students to take the test two times to avoid passing it and recommended that the resolution address the issue of remediation.

Thomas Elliott indicated that those who teach a mathematics course that gives a Carnegie unit of credit must be fully licensed in mathematics and would not be impacted by the resolution.

Gertrude Jones stated that it is difficult to determine who is teaching mathematics in the elementary grades and that all should be competent in mathematics.

Jane Massey-Wilson suggested looking at the teaching performance of those who have not passed the Praxis I mathematics assessment to determine how the students in their

classrooms are performing in mathematics and submit the results as part of the public comment period.

Brenda Duda called for the question. A motion to support the resolution was asked for but none was given. The members of ABTEL did not support the resolution.

Jill Fox requested that the following points should be made when ABTEL's concerns are expressed to the Board of Education:

ABTEL is not supporting the resolution in the present form because it is too open-ended. The resolution should include the requirement of remediation. Vague references such as a "few points" need to be clarified.

Susan Walton agreed and added that ABTEL would welcome public comment on the Praxis I assessments.

Thomas Elliott reminded the members of their advisory role to the Board and suggested that the resolution might be forwarded for public comment without ABTEL support.

Brenda Duda thanked the members for their comments and feedback.

Introduction of the Teacher of the Year

Prior to lunch, Cari Vickey, the Virginia Teacher of the Year 2001, was introduced and received a standing ovation. Ms Vickey responded that being chosen Teacher of the Year was a gift that she would use to be an advocate for teachers and children in Virginia.

Following lunch, Item D was presented before Item C.

Agenda Item D: A Teaching Reading Test for Elementary, Middle, Special Education, and English as a Second Language Teachers in Virginia

Bart Perlman, Educational Testing Service, presented information on two new reading tests now available from ETS: Elementary and Secondary Reading Across the Curriculum, RAC – E and RAC – S.

The test consists of 60 multiple choice items and 3 constructed response items that relate to specialized knowledge for elementary or secondary teaching. The test is new and is being used by Maryland for all teachers – not for initial licensure.

If ABTEL wishes to consider this test, the following would occur:

1. Copies of the test will be brought to Richmond.
2. ABTEL members and reading specialists examine the test to determine alignment with our requirements.
3. If in alignment, panel for validation and standard setting would be convened.
4. ETS would submit a report of the panel's recommendation to ABTEL.

The panel composition must reflect the population of teachers expected to take the test.

Mychele Brickner asked if national reading experts were involved in the development of the tests. In response, Bart Perlman suggested that he will have the names of the reviewers at the next ABTEL meeting.

Mary McCauley asked when the test should be taken. Mr. Perlman responded that the test should be taken at the end of a program near the time students take the Praxis II Content Assessment.

The second presenter, Dick Allen of National Evaluation Systems (NES) indicated that NES has several available reading tests but that the RICA is closest to the one that Virginia requires. A new test for Virginia could be in place by 2002 if the development begins immediately. There would be no cost to Virginia to develop the test. Students who take the test would pay.

A decision was made to appoint a subcommittee to review the ETS and NES assessments. The subcommittee will meet between the January and March ABTEL meetings and will give a report at the March meeting.

Agenda Item C: Review of the Praxis II Vocational Education Tests

The following individuals from the Division of Vocational Education in the Department of Education joined ABTEL for discussion of this item: Neils Brooks, Glenn Anderson, Anne Rowe, Sharron Glasscock, Margaret Kirby, George Wilcox. Speaking for the Division, Neils Brooks expressed concern about the rigor and validity of the Praxis II Vocational Education tests, particularly in light of changes in technology.

Bart Perlman explained that the business, home economics, marketing, and technology tests will undergo review beginning with the fall of 2001. New tests are expected to be available by 2003. ETS believes that there are good items remaining on the tests as well as items that need to be updated.

A decision was made to convene a committee to review the tests. The committee will meet on January 23, the day following the January ABTEL meeting. A report will be given at the March ABTEL meeting.

Agenda Item E: Briefing on the Validation and Standard-Setting Studies of the Elementary Content Tests and Health and Physical Education Test

Patty Pitts presented information on these Praxis II tests for members of ABTEL to take action at the January meeting. On May 9-10, 2000, validation and standard setting studies were conducted for the elementary test and the health and physical education test. Prior to the standard setting, a match study was conducted that verified alignment between the test items and the current requirements in these areas.

At the January meeting, the results of the match study will be reviewed and recommendations for cut scores for each test will be made. Currently, these tests are not being required for licensure.

Agenda Item F: Final Review of Legislative Initiatives for the 2001 General Assembly

JoAnne Carver presented findings on the feasibility of implementing a Peer Review Process for teachers in Virginia. She reported that a peer review involves expert teachers looking at the performance of probationary teachers or of experienced teachers who are having problems.

Some teacher organizations have endorsed the practice. Programs in Ohio, California, and Minnesota were examined. All teachers who participate in these states have received training and all have release time and receive financial support.

Not many Virginia divisions have a peer review process. The Division of Teacher Education and Licensure conducted a telephone survey. Of the 94 Virginia divisions responding, 11 are conducting some form of peer review using consulting teachers or letting teachers choose if they want to use the peer review process. Some school divisions are putting study groups together and others are not considering a peer review process. The availability of substitute teachers is a big barrier. Peer review is not effective without peer assistance. There are approximately 5,000 probationary teachers in Virginia.

Thomas Elliott reported on the use of the local superintendent's license and the career switcher alternative route to licensure. Ron Diss suggested that the Department of Education should follow up on the teachers who complete the alternative program to determine what allows them to be successful. He questioned whether all beginning teachers have the same level of support.

Agenda Item G: Liaison Reports

Thomas Elliott reported a new feature for ABTEL meetings. The community college and SCHEV liaisons will report at each meeting on items that are not on the agenda.

Carole Ballard, the Virginia Community College System representative, reported on the Community College Task Force on Teacher Preparation. The task force is developing a state-wide advising manual for use in working with community college students who wish to transfer to four-year teacher preparation programs. They are also working with local school divisions to have community college students complete early field experiences in public schools. On March 30, 2001, the second colloquium on teacher preparation will be held at the Virginia Science Museum.

SCHEV will report at the January meeting.

Adjournment

Brenda Duda adjourned the meeting at 3:13 p.m.